

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, SY, US, IS, PLO

SUBJ: SYRIAN SUGGESTION FOR US ACCEPTANCE OF CONCEPT

"INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN DELEGATION" AT GENEVA

REF: DAMASCUS 0929

1. SUMMARY:

ASAD'S POLITICAL ADVISOR SUGGESTS WAY TO BREAK PRESENT
IMPASSE WOULD BE AMERICAN STATEMENT THAT WE ARE PREPARED
ACCEPT CONCEPT OF ATTENDANCE AT GENEVA OF "AN INDEPEN-
DENT PALESTINIAN DELEGATION." END SUMMARY

2. IN MEETING WITH PRESIDENT'S POLITICAL ADVISOR DAOUDI
MARCH 2, I COMMENTED THAT DURING THE FOUR TRIPS I HAD
MADE TO WASHINGTON SINCE LAST APRIL, I HAD CONSISTENTLY
BEEN THE LEAST ABLE OF MY COLLEAGUES IN THE AREA
TO COMMENT WITH AUTHORITY ON THE THINKING OF
MY HOST GOVERNMENT. I HAD RETURNED HERE
IN NOVEMBER WITH SEVERAL CAREFULLY PREPARED PROPOSALS,
WHICH SYRIA HAD RATHER SUMMARILY DISMISSED. SHORTLY THEREAFTER,
DAMASCUS ANNOUNCED ITS INITIATIVE TO LINK UNDOF RENEWAL WITH
THE SC DEBATE WITHOUT ANY PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH US. IT
THEN PROFESSED UNHAPPINESS WITH OUR VOTE. WAS IT NOT TIME TO
TRY TO INJECT MORE FRANKNESS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP AND EXPLORE
AREAS OF POSSIBLE AGREEMENT BEFORE GOING PUBLIC?

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3. DAOUDI REPLIED THAT IT WAS AMERICA'S TURN TO COME UP WITH

FRESH IDEAS. OUR JANUARY VETO KILLED A DRAFT RESOLUTION WHICH SYRIA HAD ACCEPTED DESPITE HAVING TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ITS OWN POSITION AND ON WHICH IT HAD BROUGHT THE PLO ALONG. IT REMAINED CONVINCED THE SC DEBATE HAD SERVED THE CAUSE OF PEACE BUT FOR THE PRESENT IT HAD NOTHING FURTHER TO INITIATE. I DID NOT REHEARSE IN REPLY ALL THE REASONS FOR OUR VETO, BUT REAFFIRMED THAT HAD WE NOT DONE SO ISRAELIS WOULD HAVE RETREATED FURTHER FROM SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. DAOUDI ASKED QUICKLY IF I MEANT ISRAEL WOULD HAVE MOVED TOWARDS WAR, I SAID MY REFERENCE HAD BEEN ONLY TO ISRAELI READINESS FOR POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS.

4. THEN NOTED THAT SOME SYRIANS WERE REPORTEDLY TALKING OF A SERIES OF POLITICAL "VICTORIES" AGAINST ISRAEL: FIRST, WHEN THE COMMITTEE OF 20 ON PALESTINE TABLES ITS REPORT IN JUNE, THEN AT THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AND FINALLY IN NEW YORK, WHEN SYRIA WILL MOVE TO HAVE ISRAEL DENIED ITS UNGA SEAT. DID SYRIA HAVE NOTHING MORE CONSTRUCTIVE TO OFFER?

5. DAOUDI REPLIED THAT THE SYRIAN LEADERSHIP BELIEVED THE USG UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING POSITIVE ABOUT THE ME UNTIL AFTER OUR ELECTIONS. SINCE ACTION MUST INVOLVE SOME FURTHER MOVEMENT IN THE UN CONTEXT, AND, IF JANUARY AT THE SC WAS "THE WRONG TIME AND PLACE FOR THE USG TO ACT," OUR ABILITY TO ACT SURELY WAS BECOMING LESS LIKELY WITH EACH PASSING DAY. AS FAR AS DAMASCUS WAS CONCERNED, EVER SINCE THE SAUNDERS STATEMENT WE HAD BEEN STEPPING BACKWARD FROM DEALING WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE OF PALESTINIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE PEACE PROCESS. (HE BRUSHED ASIDE MY CHALLENGE FOR HIM TO CITE EVIDENCE.)

6. TURNING MORE POSITIVE, DAOUDI THEN SUGGESTED WE FIND A WAY TO ANNOUNCE OUR READINESS TO ACCEPT, AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, "AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN DELEGATION." IF WE DID THIS, IT WOULD BE SEEN AS A CLEAR STEP FORWARD BOTH BY THE SARG AND THE PLO. THE LATTER, HE ASSERTED, WOULD NOT RPT NOT HAVE TO BE MENTIONED IN OUR STATEMENT. SUCH A PRONOUNCEMENT, WHICH SYRIA KNEW WE WOULD HAVE TO COORDINATE WITH ISRAEL, WOULD OPEN THE DOOR TO REAL PROGRESS AND TO AN EVENTUAL
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RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. BUT TIME WAS SHORT, HE CONCLUDED; BREAKING THE PRESENT STALEMATE IS BECOMING AN URGENT MATTER. HE NOTED THAT FOREGOING WAS A "PERSONAL" IDEA, ADDING ENIGMATICALLY, "BUT I KNOW MY GOVERNMENT'S AND THE PALESTINIAN THINKING."

7. SAID I COULD NOT COMMENT ON THE VIABILITY OF HIS IDEA BUT WOULD REPORT IT DIRECTLY. THANKED HIM FOR EXCHANGE WHICH I

HOPED WE COULD DEVELOP FURTHER IN THE FUTURE.

8. SUGGEST THIS MESSAGE BE PASSED AMMAN AND CAIRO.
MURPHY

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